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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this case study was to look closely at one single-parent Anglo-American family, members' daily patterns of living, and psychosocial patterns that may set them apart as an achieving family. The major assumption guiding the research effort was the thesis that home environments of interpersonally competent American youngsters show some rather consistent psychosocial patterns--regardless of race or socioeconomic background. The mother of the family observed was drawn from a volunteer sample of 32 Los Angeles mothers and interviewed in depth regarding her perceptions of present and past family dynamics related to her fourth grade son's school situation, as well as about her family and community network perceptions. The emphasis was on identifying key elements or components of the patterns of social interaction in this family that contributed to this fourth grader's achievement. The study of the emotional family tone, role behavior of the parents and child in a typical day, and socialization processes during leisure and labor events all revealed evidence of a supportive functional environment with these patterns well established. (Author/RH)

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Achievement Dynamics in a Single Parent Anglo-American Family: A Case Study

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to look closely at one family, their daily patterns of living and psychosocial patterns that may set them apart as an achieving family. The mother was one from a volunteer sample of thirty-two Los Angeles mothers interviewed in depth (Clark, 1983) regarding her perceptions of present and past family dynamics related to her fourth grade son's school situation as well as her family and community network perceptions. The emphasis was identifying key elements or components of the patterns of social interaction in this family that contributed to this fourth grader's achievement. The study of the emotional family tone, role behavior of the parent and child in a Typical Day, and socialization processes during leisure and labor events all revealed evidence of a supportive functional environment with these patterns well established.

Table of Contents

	Page
Introduction and Description of Conceptual Model	1
Introduction to the Case Study	9
Family Background and Resources	12
Mother's and Father's Personality Role Traits, and Moral Tone	14
Social Network Structure	24
Child's Personality Role, and Traits	28
Role Behavior of Child in a Typical Day	29
Socialization Processes During Leisure Events	31
Socialization During Labor Activities	37
Spin-Offs of Activity Structure	46
Affect and Emotional Tone	50
Recommendations and Conclusions	52
References	54

Introduction and Description of Conceptual Model

Clark's (1983) model of a Family Social System is the framework for the examination of the data presented in this paper. Clark proposes a relationship between the family interaction system, the external mediating structures of the larger society (that is, social networks), and children's school performance. He used two environmental constructs: (1) psychological-emotional dimensions, and (2) basic communication style.

> My argument is that a family's ability to equip its young members with survival and "success" knowledge is determined by the parents' (and other older family members') own upbringing, the parents' current support networks, social relationships and other circumstances outside the home, and most centrally, the parents' current social relations in the home, and their satisfaction with themselves and with home conditions. (Clark, 1983, p. 1)

These interactions give an overall family "cultural style" for children's behavior. Two basic communication styles, "sponsored independence style" or "unsponsored independence style" derived from Baumrind's proposed patterns of parent-child communication (Baumrind, 1971), are available to parents for assisting children in achieving family and life's major roles. Parents in families of achieving children use their influence in a largely authoritative "sponsored" way. They are highly involved, and interested in their children's activities, consistently monitoring, etc.

This style efficiently facilitates children's social competence. By contrast, "unsponsored independence" is the basic communication style in low achievers' families. There is limited parent involvement and interest with children; limited, infrequent, and inconsistent expectations and standards for behavior at home.

In achieving families, Clark found a parental push for development of intellectual, self-concept, and skills dimensions. Parental enactment was observed in deliberate learning activities and leisure. Different family expressive modes were also seen in their style of communication, in their form of attachment, mutuality, and love/nurturance patterns.

Clark uses a structural rendition of interaction theory (Stryker, 1980) to describe how psychological factors and interpersonal behaviors are interwoven during daily experiences in a household to help produce competent youth. Interaction theory views children's learning and knowledge attainment as a result of the usual and unusual daily communications within an interaction system of role relations between parents, children and other significant figures. Stryker asserts:

> It is in the context of the social process--the ongoing patterns of interaction joining individual actors--that social structure operates to constrain the conceptions of self, the definitions of the situation, and the behavioral opportunities and repertoires that bound and guide the interaction that

> takes place. Or, as Weinstein and Tanur put it, social structure makes available for any encounter the resources for any constructed definition of the situation. And it is in the interaction that takes place that social structure itself is fundamentally changed, modified, elaborated on, or reaffirmed. (Stryker, 1980, p. 52)

Stryker's version incorporates elements of role theory in the concept of "role." The use of status (or set of rights and obligations) positions are used as "symbols for the kinds of persons it is possible to be in society." Status positions may serve as predictors of persons' behavior in that rule-role norms are attached to each status position. He also points out that persons generally define themselves in terms and categories in relationship to others.

> When entering interactive situations, persons define the situation by applying names to it, to the other participants in the interaction, to themselves, and to particular features within the situation, and use the resulting definition to organize their own behavior accordingly. (Stryker, 1980, p. 54).

By taking the role of others, while attempting to "define" what is happening in a situation, persons can anticipate the consequences of possible actions and therefore can change or redirect their own behavior. In Stryker's model these concepts are viewed from a

"systems" context in which one part is affected or dependent on the other parts--a system of interacting, interrelated parts (Stryker, 1980, p. 67).

Bronfenbrenner's (1979, p, 58) description of the dynamics of developmental dyads, providing an ecological niche, is also useful theory for this paper. The dyad he points out is important both for development in its own right and also serves as "the basic building block of microsystem, making possible the formation of larger interpersonal structures--triads, tetrads, and so on." When two persons enter into a joint activity enduring feelings may occur between them. As the level of mutuality and reciprocity increases, so does the developmental impact along with a step-by-step change of balance of power to the developing person. This facilitates learning and development for the developing person into more complex patterns of reciprocal activity when with someone with whom there has been a strong and lasting attachment. The family provides the richest source of dyadic relationships along with the phenomenon called a second-order effect in which the indirect influence of third parties is taken into account.

Bronfenbrenner describes the family and its interrelationships as being the microsystem in which a developing person experiences patterns of activities, roles, and relationships with significant others. Bronfenbrenner describes all of these forces as being part of the ecological environment, and its sets of systems.

These influence a child's performance in school. The mesosystems (active participation of a person in two or more settings, e.g., home, school, and peer group), exosystems (indirectly affect the person, e.g., the affect of the parents' work place on the child), and macrosystems (ideologies and belief systems common to the culture as a whole) support the social network component of Clark's model.

Nye's (1976) work relating to role structure and family analysis is helpful in expanding this concept of structural roles. He proposes a relationship between the structural properties of roles and family behavior, that is, behavior of husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, and children. Two construct elements used by Nye are: (1) societal norms, and (2) societal sanctions. Societal norms consist of societally-defined duties and privileges or cultural guides to role behavior for family members. Societal sanctions define means of enforcment conformity to the cultural guides of role behavior. Nye provides further elaboration of the intervening element of family norms and sanctions. He assesses the family's instrumental orientation as a function of parents' socializing behavior during enactment of eight family roles. The socialization role is defined as the social and psychological development of the child. The family's expressive orientation as a function of parental enactment of the child care and therapeutic roles are assessed. He defines the child care role as the physical

and psychological maintenance of the child, and the therapeutic role as primarily the emotional maintenance of the child and other family members. Nye would concur with Clark's scheme in that some of the parents' roles interact with external resources. Roles performed in settings outside the home (examples: provider role, kinship role, and recreational role) impact on a child's achievement and development.

Clark's model, as already noted, incorporates the psychological disposition of the family members and that of the affective climate forces. It further includes the normative structure of the family such as role expectations, standards of conduct, morality attitudes and behaviors, and family values. This is further translated into family dispositions toward learning, working and achieving.

Clark views the daily activity structure of parents and children a determinant in a child's achievement. This "sponsorship" of parents of interacting with their children concerning labor activities, leisure activities and other family processes, contributes to the extent a child aspires to achieve. Nye described these activity roles as those of child socialization, child care, housekeeping, sexual and recreational.

Introduction to the Case Study

Sarah is one mother from a volunteer sample of thirty-two Los Angeles mothers interviewed in depth (Clark, 1983) regarding her perceptions of present and past family dynamics related to her

fourth-grade son Josh's school situation as well as her family and community network perceptions. The Reimer family represented an achieving single-parent Anglo-American family who lived in a predominantly white lower-middle-class community in a northwestern section of the city. The household consists of Josh, his 12-year-old brother, and his mother, Sarah. Sarah is divorced from Josh's father, and a year and a half ago, she remarried. However, she and her present spouse have lived very briefly together (a month or two). Presently this situation is unresolved.

A major assumption of this study was: "Home environments of inter-personally competent American youngsters show some rather consistent psychosocial patterns--regardless of their race or socioeconomic background." (Clark, 1983, p. 12) The emphasis, then, was looking at individual family units to find variations in achievement.

Data on the children's competence as students were gathered from the mothers and then formally assessed. Permission was received from the parents to examine five school measures of these children: grades in reading and math, achievement test scores in reading, teacher assessment of the child's ability in new roles, and teacher assessment of child's social competence in the class room (Clark, 1983, p. 13).

The purpose of this paper, then, is to look closely at this one family, their daily patterns of living, and psychosocial patterns that may set them apart as an achieving family.

The evidence from the questionnaire and interview seems to indicate a sense of purpose in this household with a definite and articulated value system. At this stage of the family development in which there are school-age children, this mother sees herself as "in charge" and "responsible" for the children in terms of physical, educational, and nurturance needs. Her focus appears to be upon the children and their needs. As she stated:

> I try, and I usually gauge everything I do with the children with what they seem to want and you can make terrible errors that way, and I'll find myself sometimes apologizing and saying, "I thought you really needed that but maybe you didn't." Sometimes it is a punishment or whatever. But I usually try to get it from them. It's easier that way. It's like everything else, you know. People say, "How did you toilet train your children by the time they were two?" They say, "How did you do it?" Well, I didn't do it, but they did it themselves but I was always there ready to jump on the slightest inclination that a kid who's going to tell me he wanted to "pee." You know, so that I would always try to be aware of it, so if I saw him walking around going like this, I'd say, "you want to pee, don't you? I can tell." And he'd say, "yes." Then it's that kind of thing.

Family Background and Resources

Josh's mother has experienced a lot of change in the last ten years since Josh was born. She has been through transitions of becoming a parent entering the work world, divorce, remarriage, and separation. These transitions required shifts in her multiple roles. At the time of Josh's birth she had one other son about three years of age who was born about the same time she left her native aristocratic English life to live in Los Angeles with a Jewish husband. She has remained in contact with her family, sees them about once a year, and they write letters infrequently. She described them as not close. Her parents reared her in what can be described as a traditional aristocratic style. It can be inferred her father made family decisions and enacted the disciplinarian role. Decision-making in her home was parent oriented. Sarah stated her father made the decisions and she had no influence in family matters. Her father is titled a knight and her mother never worked. She was the first born; however, her brother, born second, had higher status due to his gender. She was "expected" to acquire the equivalent of a bachelor of science degree and she went as far as high school.

Ten years ago, according to her response to a questionnaire item, she began working in clerical-type work. Approximately eight years ago she and the children's father divorced and she and the children moved to their present neighborhood. One and one-half

years ago she married her present spouse. They do not live together and she expressed dissatisfaction with this arrangement. She in fact has expressed more closeness with Josh's father than with her "husband."

From the time of Josh's birth both parents have been providing stimulating objects and activities, with his mom the most consistently present parent. Josh's parents divorced several years ago, and while Josh lives with his mother and older brother, he visits his father every other week-end. Their father is a television writer and producer. He takes either Josh or his brother out once each week during the week on a rotating basis. At these times he and their mother also converse about activities including school activities and personal events and activities. Mom and dad's relationship (based on the interview and questionnaire) seems cordial.

Developmental landmarks during Josh's first year were within the usual range. Mother described the use of educational toys for stimulation from birth and said Josh was held and talked to a lot. He was sent to nursery school from age two and a half until kindergarten and began kindergarten at five and three-quarters years of age. His mother has worked from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Reading aloud to him was a frequent family activity during the years he could not read, by both of his parents. Although he knew his alphabet earlier, he began reading

by about six years of age. He watched Sesame Street and Mr. Rogers regularly.

Mother's and Father's Personality Role Traits, and Moral Tone

Sarah has experienced a lot of role changes in relation to social status, new cultures, marriage, motherhood, divorce, and remarriage. Yet she seems to be a competent mother and seems to perceive herself as a capable parent and competent woman. As pointed out by her choices on the questionnaire, she accepts responsibility when things go wrong, has high expectations of herself and does the best job she can. She "strongly" sees herself as a person of worth and equal with others. She views herself as able to do things as well as others and has confidence in her own ability to carry out plans. She seems to have confidence in her ability to effect change in her life and feels some power and control in this regard. In accordance with this, her sense of fate control seems low; that is, she believes in her own control. For example, on the questionnaire she "very strongly disagreed" to "people like my child will not have much of a chance to do what he wants to do," and "You have to be lucky to get good grades in Josh's school," and also to the question, "People who question the accepted way of doing things usually just end up causing trouble." These responses would seem to reflect a belief in herself. In response to the choice on causes for her kind of life, her

response was, "I don't feel anything has kept me from having the kind of life I want." She did select "agree" with "One should always show respect to those in authority." She expressed confidence that when she makes plans she can carry them out. It would seem the responsible manner in which she carries out her role as parent and worker indicates minimal belief in fate control.

Josh's mother and father are divorced; however, she spoke respectfully of him and indicated a cooperative adult relationship in terms of their children. They sit down and talk apparently rather regularly. Very little is said regarding the present spouse.

The biophysical health of this family seems good. There were no reported illnesses, injuries or disabilities either physically or related to learning. The children were both born within a marriage relationship that ended in divorce. There is no known or reported problem with drugs or alcohol.

Josh's mom portrays an open, communicative manner. There seemed no particular hostility in her relationships to her present family, her divorced children's father, her past or present in-laws or her own childhood family. She does not portray depression, boredom, undue anxiety, defensiveness, paranoia, fear or guilt. She expresses some dependency needs, some worries. Her style seems casual and relaxed and would therefore seem to convey a wide comfort zone. She would seem in fact to be quite well put together.

Information regarding Josh's father was very limited and did not include data related to personality factors. As was previously stated, he works in the entertainment world of television.

Sarah does work outside the home on a part-time basis, and has friends she sees. She is home during the hours the children are there. Her style seems somewhat casual, yet there is structure. She stated she thinks it is important to "teach your children what you believe." She models her values and beliefs to her children. For example, her racial values and beliefs emerge in her comments on ethnic diversity.

> I'm trying to think about what I've ever racially thought. I don't know. We have an Asian neighborhood here. One of the interesting things, of course, is that it's all in neighborhoods. All the Asians live in one place; all the Blacks live in another place, and so you drive through a neighborhood and you'll say, "Look, there's all Asians here." For they are all Chinese, or whatever they say, Japanese, I think they call them. And so sometimes I try to point out the difference between the Asian races because there is such a difference, physically even. So I have sometimes said, "If you look at a Chinese and a Korean you will notice an enormous difference just physically; they are two kinds of people and you can tell from the names where they come from and everything. Try and split them up." You know, I always try to

split up the different groups into more human, more--not just, "that's a bunch of yellow faces." These are people with different cultural ideas. They have a cultural contribution. What is so fascinating is something we talk about all the time--how American everyone really is although they think they have all these vast cultural differences.

She stresses and values education for future success, and encourages Josh in his homework and participates in school activities. She expresses satisfaction with her own life.

As for her achievement goals for Josh, while she is actively involved and interested in his learning, she appeared not overly concerned about his achievement in terms of expectation. She described him as being capable of anything he wants to do. Lowest acceptable achievement would be high school. Both of Josh's parents seem to have an exceptionally large "world view" that has enhanced Josh's learning.

Josh's mother does seem open and invites new experiences. It seems she has been aware of what she needs in order to get along in the world. The friends and experiences in her life would substantiate this. Socially she has mixed with a variety of people. She reported diversity in her friendships--stockbroker, advertising executive, private detective, etc. She seems to be somewhat artistic--works with clay with the school children at Josh's school. She also keeps her own writing journal and reads a lot. Even

volunteering and participating so openly in this study is evidence for willingness for new encounters. She does wish for security. Some evidence for this was reflected in her reference regarding her present marriage:

> My poor present husband keeps saying, "You married me for purely practical reasons, 'cause you won't live with me." I keep saying, "It's not good if you won't live with me. That's part of marriage." He'd say, "Why do you want me to live with you?" I'd say, "Because it makes me feel safer, more secure, and I need help around here."

There seems to be a natural curiosity for learning in this home. Disposition toward educational work and toward the school is one of high priority, both formally and informally. Homework must be completed by Josh and they both do regular reading for pleasure. There frequently are other educational experiences such as museum visits and educational television. In the interview Sarah described herself as a "reader" and cited novels as well as regularly reading the classics (i.e., Catcher in the Rye). She has studied a lot of Shakespeare and speaks French. She spoke of ancient Greek:

> I mean it's a whole different world out there. You know, all for nothing but to stretch the mind--for no other reason whatsoever. That was the wonderful thing about my education. It was the only thing they were really concerned about, that your mind gets broader and there was no other reason for it whatsoever.

Interviewer: Was that legitimate for you? She responded:

> Oh, yeah, I think it has really made an enormous difference to my life, my feeling of security, my understanding of how crazy the world is. You know, I feel a lot more secure than people around here just because I know what happened in ancient Greece. I mean, it was a lot worse then. The civilization felt there were still people around.

Sarah seems to view life quite philosophically--she has a keen sense of fairness, faith, responsibility, compassion, and a "live and let live" attitude. She does not seem to have undue expectations, and therefore does not sound cynical and disappointed.

Let us now examine more closely just what goes on dynamically in this household along with underlying elements when possible. When asked by the interviewer, "What family members do you feel most free to talk things over with?" she responded, "My ex-husband." She further stated that she tells her troubles to him and that her ex-husband, and not her present husband, seeks her out for advice and guidance. Further on the questionnaire she responded "highly satisfied" with her ex-husband in regard to "A supporter and listener who gives reassurance and offers help in solving family problems." While she and her present husband seem to share very little that could appear to be therapeutic, several remarks were made regarding the children's father, her former spouse, that seem to reflect some support between them especially regarding the

children. She stated he comes over once a week to take one of the children out to dinner. At this time "we always sit down and have a long discussion."

> Oh, how everybody is doing, what kind of major achievements, what sort of events, you know, if there has been a really good picture or mark, really good story that has to be read, things like that.

Consistent, regular attention appears evident in regard to social behavior and skills in this home. First of all, role modeling is used extensively in the form of communication and discussion. Sarah stated, "I rarely stop talking, and I...I don't think we ever stop discussing things." She then remarked in some detail regarding social etiquette practices. Mom said she considers herself responsible for teaching manners about how to respond to teachers and other adults. She expects Josh to always behave in a respectful manner.

> I mean, I'm perfectly happy to have him stand up and say he disagrees with me, but I would like him to say, "excuse me, but I really disagree," rather than, "you're full of it." It's nicer when you are challenging somebody if you give them at least some regard, you know.

She has asked Josh to use last names of adults unless invited to do otherwise.

Further instruction goes on regularly regarding table manners and etiquette.

> Napkins are the present project. His principal once told me you have to tell a child an average of 722 times before he gets something, . . . so we sit down at the table and if things get disgusting, I say, "would you please pick up your knife," or "don't tear it, cut."

She has pointed out to Josh his responsibility for the consequences of his actions, such as

> spilling things, looking both ways when crossing the street. Those things I don't have too much trouble with. It's an ideological thing. I think he has some ideological differences about whether it is in fact important, since it is no skin off anybody's nose but his own. He therefore feels that he can skin it if he wants to. If he wants to tie his shoes ten times a day then it is none of my business, is his attitude. He's probably right.

She also discussed his language in relation to manners.

> His language is not very good. He tends to come out with swear words I don't like very much. It used to be very bad. In fact, I once washed his mouth out with soap, which is not like me at all, but I just couldn't stand it, and I have on occasion had to dock his allowance money because his mouth is so bad, but that is getting better.

In these discussions related to etiquette Josh may be learning to be obedient to authority and accepting responsibility for his

own behavior. He may also be learning how to care for himself in terms of appearance and hygiene, and how to get along well with those around him.

Josh's mother talked about her opinions with regard to the kinds of children she would prefer Josh to play with.

> I prefer him to be with children who take care of themselves. I don't think it is wise for a person to hang around with somebody who does stupid things a lot. Not necessarily because it makes you do stupid things, but it makes other people think you will and that is always dangerous if you've got people watching you. It's the last thing you need to have people watching you. So, I try and persuade my children to be with people that aren't being watched. They both--but they have absorbed that quite well over the years and are quite careful.

There seems to be a mix of children who are Black, Mexican, and Chinese in the area, although his school has predominantly Black students. Josh is encouraged to have friends among them.

Sarah has been divorced from Josh's father for eight years. She remarried one and one-half years ago. However, they have also been separated for all except a few months of this time. Sarah made a number of remarks that are directly related to sexual issues and it is possible there may be some role conflict and/or role strain. The following reference is related to the time following her first

marriage during which time she was dating and expresses some of her conflicting feelings.

> I mean with the men who take you out at night and make a pass at you and you say, "That is really not my style," and they say, "Well, why did you go out with me then?" That was really scary. And I think it put the children through a trip, too, because the guys would come in and take me out and then all of a sudden they wouldn't see them again because I wouldn't go to bed with the guys. I mean, they didn't know that was the reason why, but a guy would come and they would kind of look him over and make sure he was okay and everything, and the guy would take me out. And they would say, "What ever happened to that nice guy, Matt?" You know, and it was a bit odd for them, these guys drifting in and out.

These experiences contributed to her getting married again. "That is the only way to fly."

> The problem is that you have to pick someone who is mature enough to understand that, it's true. I guess you can make errors in that area. People just don't have it together enough to be able to look at a situation they are emotionally involved in, coldly enough, you know.

She spoke to some of the difficulties related to responsibility in a marriage relationship and that now her present "husband" isn't carrying them out.

Well, unfortunately, that's the thing; he doesn't. It is a recent development and I talk about it really because it affects the children so much; these things do. And children understand so clearly, even more. I was thinking the other day, it must be very hard for a boy growing up to see his mother treated with very little respect and to see her taking it because after all, I'm married to the man. I have to. To some extent I have vows that I have to fulfill, if you like. And it must be hard for them to see the guy never comes around the time my lawn needs mowing. That's okay because I pay someone to do that. You know, the front porch is falling down and all these kinds of things and I need that kind of help. And they see this guy coming and going, eat dinner, get laid every now and then, and that's all I get out of it and I don't think it does them any good at all. It makes me very nervous. I mean, I could do it if it were just me.

Social Network Structure

Josh's mother manages to structure her life in a way to nurture and empower herself. She does have supportive friends, her work, and she participates actively in Josh's school. It seems she gets limited support from kin whom she sees not more than once a year. If she confides in anyone, she says it is with her mother via phone and she also mentioned three friends. Her husband and former spouse seem to offer small amounts of emotional support. She has no ties to a

church or religious organization, no clubs or other organizations. When asked, "How often in the last year did you have family get-togethers with friends and relatives?" she responded, "Goodness, I don't know, probably somewhere between five and ten." She described family and friends occupationally as "mostly I guess you'd call them professional people, office workers, all different things, though." She further stated, "a lot of different people. I usually pick the people because of the way they think rather than what they do." She said that Josh is always included in these get-togethers and actually talks to the family and friends present, although "he'll hang around for about half an hour and then slip off with kids outside or something." When asked how long she has had these friendships, she responded, "Well, the secretary I've been friends with since I was 11, the past 25 years, and the other two, one of them for about three years and the other for about a year and a half." The level of education of most of her relatives was described as a bachelor's degree from college.

Josh's mother does have contact with her family although not more than every couple of months. They live in England and see each other approximately once each year. They do write and phone from time to time. During the interview when she was remarking about the importance of family togetherness the interviewer asked, "How do you feel about this new wave of activity, then, where in the United States so many people are moving away from that model?" She responded

in a manner, I believe, that lends insight to her feelings about kinship.

> I think it is a terrible shame and it shows. I think that one of the things--that one of the reasons--I mean, look at me and here I live God knows how many thousands of miles away from my family and I have a brother and my children have cousins that they have met twice and I think about how wonderful it would be if we were all in the same place and I feel very sorry that I moved away a lot of the time. I don't think I could live there, but I think it would be really nice if we could all be together with each other and take care of each other. I would certainly try to do that here. We have my ex-husband's mother here and my ex-husband and his old lady and we kind of have--tend to have a phony family. They are nice people, certainly as nice as. . . .

I said to her, "But they are not your side of the family." She answered:

> That's all right, though. I mean, my mother is crazy anyway, crazier than I am, and they come out and see us quite a lot, and I send my children back there in the summers. We are getting in the habit of sending them to England for part of the summer for a little bit of visiting my parents. It's cheaper than a summer camp, I guess.

The recreation role is carried out in a casual manner. There are outings to the beach and hills. They also participate in parties

from time to time with friends. Josh's mom has encouraged the boys' input in this recreational role for she stated they plan outings together. "Well, we--I always have the casting vote, you know, and otherwise it is a fairly equal discussion. And then, you know, I'll cast a vote for Josh one time, Erin another, so it's all done equally." Mom has the power in this role which seems appropriate for the developmental stage of this family.

It seems that Josh's teacher and his mother and father have a congenial relationship with each other. In the teacher's remarks she stated that Josh's mother visits his class each week and his father went on the "Catalina outing" with the class. She further stated that his mother had remarried "but parents seem to get along rather well, and both are quite involved in Josh's education." This was substantiated by his mom who said she visits his classroom each Friday afternoon and "those children who have completed their homework can do clay with me. It's fun!" She said she was planning to attend a school potluck that night. She attends all parent conferences and said Josh's father does whenever possible--at least the first one of each year. Items on the questionnaire relating to her view of Josh's teacher were all answered positively. These were items such as, "treats children fairly, friendly, interested, good teaching methods, etc."

Child's Personality Role, and Traits

From all the available evidence Josh not only is highly successful in achievement at school, but he also has a nurturing, caring home environment and supportive social structure. Josh has been in the gifted class at school in the Los Angeles School District. He was described by his teacher as a "large, pretty, and slightly immature child." He has been reading at the ninth grade level which has been his strong point. Although there was "comparatively less" achievement in math, he also received an "A" in that subject. His teacher further reported his social behavior in math as above average with academic quality average. She summarized by stating she expected excellence to continue for Josh. The other teacher comments described him as receiving much social encouragement and that he handles this well. "He is sensitive and likes to be hugged."

When Josh's mother was asked to describe Josh's personality style in contrast to his older brother, Erin, she responded:

> Well, he's much more affectionate and needs much more the closeness than Erin ever did. He needs much more affirmation. He's much less sure of himself, has much more of a tendency to go off and shut himself in his room when things get difficult, which is hard on Erin. He is much more open, much friendlier, gets along with everybody. He's much more diplomatic and in fact, Erin has learned a lot of lessons from Josh about how to treat people and how to ingratiate himself

at a party. You know, Josh will walk into a party and immediately be having a conversation with everybody and Erin will be standing in the corner kinda' waiting until Josh looks like he's talking to someone interesting; then he'll go over and join in.

On the questionnaire where Sarah was asked to select characteristics of "your child," she selected items like, "able to care for himself," "always friendly," "appreciative," "frank and honest," "helpful," "trusting," "outspoken," "likes to be taken care of," "is not critical, cold, hardhearted, jealous, overprotective, etc."

All her responses related to Josh's ability indicate that she views him as highly capable and competent. She selected items on the questionnaire such as "able to take care of self, appreciative, able to doubt others, always friendly, can be frank and honest, can be obedient, helpful, expects everyone to admire him, etc." As a student she describes him as "better than most of the students. For sure he could finish college or graduate school." If he tries she thinks he can get mostly A's. She believes he will finish college and maybe more. She would like him to graduate from University.

Role Behavior of Child in a Typical Day

The taped interview with his mother included a discussion on routine events that occurred during a typical week day in their home. This household, headed by mom, has had a warm, casual atmosphere with a lot of freedom. There is definite structure but with broad

parameters. The home appeared to be very oriented toward the children--they have been included in nearly everything. Activities were described in this interview as primarily after-school activities. This parent is definitely a participater in relation to this child's academic growth at school and in less formal learning at home. She further seemed to convey an attitude of competence related to her ability to help Josh and in his ability to learn and grow.

Although there was not any detail of the early morning activity in this household, the mother reported that she walks with Josh to the neighborhood school (approximately five blocks away) where he gets a bus to the Los Angeles school in which he is enrolled. She reported that they "talk continuously" while they are together. This may be plain talking time or it may be story time. This would be a supportive parent activity and gives Josh skill in articulating his thoughts and ideas.

This mother has a part-time job from 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. She reported that they all "converge" on the house about 3:00 p.m., when they all talk about the day while she has coffee and watches Barnaby Jones and Barney Miller. This begins a variety of activities that may be classified as leisure activities and formal learning activities. This mother remains active in delegating responsibilities, monitoring the time frames in the activities and setting limits related to the physical

environment that Josh participates in. She participates by communicating verbally and providing guidance. She is also physically present in the home after school hours.

Nye (1976) and other sociologists (Gecas, 1979) assert that parents perform roles that are necessary for family functioning. Nye specifies these roles to be that of child care, child socialization, provider, housekeeper, sexual, therapeutic, recreational and kinship. As this case study presents Josh's daily activities some of these family roles will be examined as to what happens during the activities and what roles are enacted during these events.

Socialization Processes During Leisure Events

Each day Josh has regular time for leisure activities that almost always includes some television viewing. Typically he may sit with his mother when they first arrive home when she watches Barnaby Jones and Barney Miller. This would be recreational in relation to role task, that of relaxation and entertainment. They also watch quite a lot of news and educational programs. This may be viewed as time spent in personal development recreation time or may be seen as jointly shared with a socialization/education role. That is, he may be learning skills of listening, or observing and analyzing social and verbal behavior of others. In the therapeutic sense, this mother certainly is available for listening and giving Josh opportunity to verbalize in relation to his ideas and reactions, and she is present to supply additional information, discuss problems, and so forth.

She is available for communication and expression of feelings and thoughts. In the socialization/educator role tasks, Gecas (1981) includes processes and activities in the family that contribute to developing the child into a competent, social, and moral person including right and wrong, sense of responsibility, manners and styles of communication, and discipline. Here are some of Josh's mother's responses as to what happens when they watch television.

> Oh, yeah, we talk about it. You know, various things come up. We talk about what's happening, whether it's good or bad, what we would do if we were president, those things. Really, we hear much more about the true happenings in the world and it leads to discussions of everything.

Further remarks:

> Well, you may have noticed talking to me that I very rarely stop talking, and I--I don't think we ever stop discussing things. I very strongly believe in giving my children my own moral code. I think that is terribly important. So I do--I mean, when the nuclear power stations fail I go into my "I don't know if this is such a great idea" speech. I tend to kind of say, "This is my opinion and I very strongly feel this way and you have to make your own," but needless to say, they say, "Well, mom, you are absolutely right," with stars in their eyes. Children are wonderful.

The above example reveals communication style and her role enactment related to issues of right and wrong. It can also be seen that this time spent in television viewing may provide some mental processing by Josh. In dialoging with his mother as they view programs together, Josh may gain improved skills in problem solving, further development as to his own values and beliefs along with practice in articulating them and classifying and memorization refinement. Both Clark (1983, p. 114) and Perkins (1981) have outlined possible mental processes that may result from ordinary interactions and activities in their daily lives.

The following quote gives insight into the style and the responsibility Josh's mother takes in regard to his television watching.

> I think the problem with TV is that there is so much to take in all the time. There is constantly information that never stops. My father was a firm believer that you could get mental indigestion if you drive your brain too hard, and Josh, he's always on the lookout. He is very observant; I think he is like me in that way. He's always got his eyes open to see what's happening; he always knows what's up and around. I think television just sometimes gets to him. It's noisy; it pounds at you. The commercials come on; you get to the climax in a story and all of a sudden they are singing some inane jingle at you. He thinks--I think it is just too much coming at him.

She also discussed sanctions on television watching.

> I would hate to think of them sitting down for more than an hour and a half in front of the television without them getting up and doing something else for an hour and a half. If it has been on too long, then I say, "the television has been on too long," and "It's time to turn it off."

This mother reported the television is on about two to three hours a day with less on the week-ends.

Josh's parents are divorced, as reported earlier. His father is a television writer/producer for the show Palmer's Town. Each week Josh, his brother, and their mother sit down and watch this show together. This is a "ritual" and contributes to family welfare and communication between these boys and their father. As such it seems in this instance an application to the kinship role and emotional support.

There is no role sharing related to television and the children between the parents. From the data there was no evidence of role conflict, or role strain between this mother and her son and there seems to be clear sanctioning that is not too rigid. The socialization/educator role and recreational role are solidly established with the socialization role most clearly demonstrated in the interview. This mother and her sons seem to have an attitude of respect in communicating to each other in all matters which include television.

Josh also has a radio he listens to "when it works." He likes

to listen to pop music, country western, disco, "all kinds of stuff, but it is all pop music." He also enjoys listening to tapes and phonograph records.

> We have all kinds of different records there and Josh's favorite records are Oliver, from the musical, and The Sting. But he just started playing the drums so he has gotten heavily into the Eagles' "Life in the Fast Lane." And he has a little cassette--well, he did have a little cassette player. He doesn't have one. You see, they break, then I don't know what to do, but he used to play the Eagles every time on his cassette player and Queen, "Another One Bites the Dust."

Listening to the radio and to music may give him freedom for relaxation, rhythm and some fantasy. He may also distinguish between fantasy and the real world by conversing with his parents. It may further improve his listening skills.

Between the time Josh comes home from school and the time after dinner when he studies, he also has about an hour each day for games and hobbies. "He and his friends have a deal where they are now going to play basketball for an hour after school every day and they make it maybe three times a week. He has a hoop on the garage." Increased physical coordination through practice, and confidence in his own ability to interact in cooperative small group activities may increase his self esteem and improve his skill base.

Josh's mother further reported that there are friends his age

on the street he sees. He also visits a lady who lives alone across the street sometimes and he talks to a 4-year-old boy quite a lot. He likes to play football. "He loves all those little model cars and things, space ships and things, especially die cast metal scale models of almost anything." There are rules about these games, such as, he is supposed to clean up after himself. She claims not to be very rigid about rules.

> He ought to follow them; I'm not very rigid on them. Yes, he is supposed to clean up after himself. If he starts work on something, he has to clean it up when he is finished work on it or when he has given up work on it. But it depends where he is doing it. Like he has a construction in the garage that is all built out of God knows what he has found lying around. That's been going on for weeks and it is still out there and I dare say I'll go out there some day and throw it all away because he'll never finish it, or I'll put it in a plastic bag if he wants to keep it.

Josh often rides his bike after school as well. He also plays and practices his guitar each day. Video games captured his attention for a while.

> They got disillusioned after losing so many quarters. I mean, you only get four quarters a week; you can't do it too often, especially if you like bubble gum, too. But they used to go. There was a period when they were going every afternoon, if not

to play, to at least look at others playing. But they haven't been for a couple of weeks.

Josh may be learning lessons on managing and prioritizing how to spend his money and consumerism.

As can be seen from the above description, Josh participates in a variety of leisure activities after school. There is a combination of some very physical activity either by himself or with a friend, and some more quiet activities such as TV or listening to the radio. Rule of the house during winter: "Off the street when the street lights come on." Once they come home they either do homework before or after dinner. Usually they do better after dinner.

I make dinner--we have dinner. If we are making something we'll do that or we'll play a game, watch TV, or whatever the mood happens to be. Sometimes we'll go out to dinner. Josh loves McDonald's; Erin loves pizza. And then Josh is supposed to go to bed at 8:30 but it is usually 9:00 before he starts moving. Erin goes to bed at 9:00. But it is usually 9:30. Then I go to bed at 10:00.

Socialization During Labor Activities

There is consistent reading and dialoging in this home. This mother stated that she views teaching her children things her career. From all the conversations in this home related to career, school, social etiquette, etc., it would seem she takes learning seriously. She acts as an effective role model in labor activities, requires

that homework be done, and helps out when needed. Sarah herself is an avid reader--both fiction and the classics. At the time of the interview she was reading Catcher in the Rye. She also keeps a journal. She speaks French quite well and does so with the children from time to time.

The style for homework processes in the home seem extremely relaxed. Usually homework is done after dinner and lasts about one hour. Josh rarely studies alone and usually it is done in the living room, sometimes with the TV on quietly. The activity is usually initiated by the mother: "Now it's time." They will ask her questions like, "What does this mean?" or "What's this?" Sometimes they can start and do it on their own. Usually it is just the three of them in the room, but "Josh usually manages to find something else to do simultaneously while he is working. He's usually got his arm, playing outside, or you know, counting ball bearings or some idiotic procedures while he is doing his exercise."

When asked by the interviewer if she was satisfied with this arrangement, she replied:

> Not entirely. I think it would be wonderful if both children would pick up their books and say, "Now I am going to study, Mom," and disappear into their rooms and appear an hour later having studied. It would be great. But as far as . . . it's friendly.

According to Josh's mother, he seems to have a difficult time

settling down to do his homework. She stated that once he has taken the time to study and learn something he realizes he understands better and likes that. "The problem is--the problem has been and it's getting less and less--is to get him to understand that the more he knows the better off he is." Skillful strategies by his mother then may trigger Josh's own mental processing. The rewards he may experience could be those good feelings of accomplishment associated with sticking to a difficult task, and the improved skills of reading, writing and problem solving.

She stated sometimes she does scold him because he doesn't spend enough time on his work and sometimes she looks at it and says, "That is not good enough. Write this over." This emphasizes Josh taking responsibility for his own performance of quality in his school work.

Josh does enjoy reading on his own every night and before he goes to sleep for about 20 minutes. After tucking him in with a "kiss and a hug" he reads until he is ready to go to sleep. He turns out his own light. Usually this is some type of story or a sports magazine.

Sarah subscribes to the Los Angeles Times from which she and the boys read the funnies, local news, Dear Abby, sports, etc. They also get the National Geographic.

The most exciting thing we had recently was a wonderful article about gorillas. We have a special affection for gorillas in

> this family because my father looks like one. And so we have always had a fond spot for gorillas. They had a wonderful article about gorillas the other day, reading how they construct their society and attitudes they have toward each other, their families, and so on. It was really very interesting.

These materials and discussions regarding them may help create an expanded world view for Josh. Josh's mother said she used to read aloud to Josh and he to her, but "I have slowly gotten out of the habit except my little tidbits that I wander about with. No, we don't either one of us. He doesn't read as much as he should to me and I don't read as much as I should to him. I don't know why." She stated there are no rules about how little or how much he reads and that he seems to like it increasingly more.

> I think he likes it more and more. He was saying to me the other day that what was nice about a book is that you can put it down and do something else and it is still there when you come back. He has a hard time finding a story that gets to him. He just does. He would really rather read books about how things work, or as I said, the Guinness Book of Records. Stuff like that he likes best.

Josh is a good reader, reading at the ninth-grade level. He enjoys reading and reads some each day at a consistent time and place. His mother supports him by listening to him, encouraging

him, and they share stories. The reading aloud to each other seems to be a declining activity, while reading as an activity on a regular basis seems to be solidly established. Through Josh's reading experiences he may be learning skills in interpreting challenging materials, improving memory skills, and learning information about the world to incorporate in his knowledge base as well as generating thoughts for his own ideas and beliefs.

Josh does do some writing. His mother reported that he always writes thank you letters at Christmas and birthdays. "And occasionally he'll write somebody and he'll think, 'Oh, it will be nice,' but not very often--twice a year." He also writes notes to Mommy. She commented:

> Well, the notes to Mommy started as soon as he could write "I love you, Josh." But otherwise not much. He's not much of a writer, really. I haven't had one in a long time, actually. Well, let me see, when was the last one? Oh, that was a thank you note from school, come to think of it, or something or another. Not very often, every couple of months, maybe six a year.

It may be possible to deduce that Josh's mother "encourages" or perhaps "requires" thank you notes in response to presents; however, the data were not detailed in this area. Encouragement may also be inferred. There were no stated sanctions. There was no evidence of role strain or conflict related to writing. Josh is gaining some

skill at conveying his thoughts through these writing experiences. Although there was no direct evidence from the data, it would be a likely prediction that the role task of writing would be an emerging one associated with age and experience. His mother has a history of writing letters and keeping a journal. She is a good role model for this. For Josh, he may experience this as an adjunct to communication, and a creative outlet and skill.

Josh also has to go to his room, close his door, and practice his guitar each day. According to his mother, he does not like separation by a closed door.

There seems to be an abundance of topically-focused discussions in this home and there is a wide range of subject interest. These conversations occur daily and approximately four to five hours per week. As Josh's mother stated, "I don't think we ever stop discussing things." These interactions are times when knowledge relates to specific topics--etiquette issues related to socially-proper actions are discussed, and values are passed from this mother to her sons. These informal times are also used for story telling and jokes:

> Awful--worst jokes in the--I mean, they are awful. At the moment they are all jokes about babies getting mangled and things. I am trying to think of one. I am not good at remembering jokes. They love to tell me jokes because I laugh. But what they are, they are equivalent to the ones I used to tell when I was a little kid about "Mommy, Mommy, I

keep going around in circles." "Shut up, or I'll nail the other foot to the ground." It's those kind of jokes--veritable beastly jokes. What's red and green and goes round and round? A frog in a blender.

They also do some singing in the car. Some of these songs come "from babyhood that I used to sing going to bed." Then there are some old Irish ones. "We have been singing a lot of folk songs lately like Dark as a Dungeon, etc. We all congratulate each other when we do those things. It makes us feel good, like we are members of a special club or something. We know all these songs."

They talk about what has been going on at school. We talk about everything. We talk about the academic level, whether it is good enough, whether it is a good idea to be doing as much homework as he is doing, how lazy he tends to be. I also remember when I first started going up there when they were first all beginning. We used to get quite chaotic in the class and have a lot of discussions about how important it was to listen to the teacher, try to be respectful and get what you could out of it and make sure you get all you can out of school, 'cause that's what it's there for. Those kinds of talks--yeah, pep talks.

Various work-related topics are discussed during which values are included. For example, in speaking of her own work:

Well, he knows the job I'm doing at the moment I don't like

> very much, but since I have to earn a living I do it as well as I can, and they think very highly of me because of it. He knows his father enjoys his work and works very hard, and that his father is a success because he has worked hard. And he goes and sees what he does, understands that work is drudgery as well as pleasure.

She further stated the children had been at both parents' places of work. She commented on their father's work and his talking with them: "He sees his father working all the time which is nice because it is a writer that sits down with a pencil and piece of paper, so it is very easy for a child to imitate that." In another instance she spoke of conversations with their father: "I think Ronnie probably talks with them as much as I do if not more. He has less time with them, so I would think that on week-ends it gets up to around three hours a day." There are also discussions about consequences of being around other children who break rules, etc. For example,

> Like some kid who gets caught smoking marijuana out front at school, and I say, "If you hang around with kids who are stupid like that, what'll happen is that one day you will get caught, too. And you'll be in trouble." So when they see a kid doing something that is essentially stupid they all say, "This person was--wow--you should have seen," and then we have a discussion. If you are going to smoke marijuana, for God's sake, do it in the bathroom at home.

These kinds of discussions may be very helpful to Josh in formulating his own morals and values, and in planning his own strategies when he is personally confronted with difficult dilemmas away from his adult authorities.

The two children help with a small amount of the housekeeping chores; however, as Sarah says, she assumes full responsibility. The data were sparse with anything related to housekeeping tasks. The primary socialization/educator task observed from the data was that Josh's mother puts some effort into teaching him to be responsible for himself, including cleaning up. The following statements support this. "Yes, he is supposed to clean up after himself. If he starts work on something, he has to clean it up when he is finished work or when he has given up work on it." Sarah also stated that Josh has his own room where he is to keep his things. She referred to it as "his junk heap." There was no evidence of sanctioning in this regard. Another time she remarked:

> Right, you are not saying it has to be right or things have to be good. Your room has to be cleaned and none of that has to happen. It's perfectly okay, as long as you are always taking care of yourself and doing the best you can, as long as you don't hurt anyone else. That's it, you know; then it's easy that way.

This previous remark was a response as an example that she does not expect or place pressure upon Josh to do things perfectly. This

could be thought of as a therapeutic role behavior related to housekeeping activities. There was no evidence of lack of clarity or lack of respect between this mother and son related to housekeeping roles. There appeared to be a small amount of sharing housekeeping tasks with no conflict or role strain. It would be an assumption that Josh will share with more household tasks as he grows older and is able to take more responsibility and has more skills. The patterns of housekeeping appear to be solidly established, although relaxed, which would fit the normative decline of the housekeeping role suggested by Nye.

Spin-Offs of Activity Structure

As stated earlier, this home is a single-parent home with two male children. There was no evidence of "sexism" verbalized except as Sarah was treated by her own family where her brother counted first. She seems to have a very humanistic approach rather than a specific gender orientation. Sarah is the responsible parent related to planning times for work, study and play in this household. Their father does have some role sharing since they have time with him on a regular basis.

Sarah calls her role as parent educator her "responsibility" and her "career." One could deduce she therefore sees the importance in terms of "future" for Josh. It does not seem a concern related to upward mobility. Possibly this in some way related to her own background as English upper class. It simply did not seem a concern.

Discipline. Although the atmosphere seems to be permissive and relaxed in this household, there certainly are rules and codes of conduct. Mom structures these and they are carried out by Josh and his brother. Mom stated, "Josh always needs prodding; he never needs help. I say 'do it,' and he does it [relating to chores]. He hates these activities. He would rather live like a prince and have someone dress him." Mom says she does most of the chores. In response to "Do you ever punish Josh for not doing his things correctly?" she responded, "No, I punish him for not doing them, but as far as not correctly, no, because he usually, once he's doing them, he does it as well as he can, and then if he hasn't I make him go back and finish." As mentioned earlier, there are rules regarding homework, manners, and letting her know where they are at all times.

Educational expectations. Sarah's family background roots would seem to place prestige and honor on family heritage and education. This interpretation comes from subtleties rather than directly from the interview or questionnaire. The family is well educated. Both of her parents and her brother have higher education. She noted on the questionnaire that she would like Josh to graduate from university, and she has had these hopes since his birth. She stated that her parents wanted her to graduate from college. "They simply expected it--I expect they just said, 'When you finish college....'" She spoke also of the superior status her brother had to her in her English aristocratic family, even though she was first born, due to his sex.

Androgyny. Activity patterns in this household may be viewed as humanistic or androgynous in their structure rather than moralistic or gender oriented. Support for this lies in the following factors: (1) Household leisure and labor activities are not defined or identified as "gender appropriate" activities. (2) The two boys are primarily parented by their working mother with some support from their father whose occupation is in the arts. Their family structure is not a traditional family model. (3) Friendships of this mother include both men and women with whom both Josh and his brother interact. These friends include a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures with a strong representation from the arts. (4) Josh has been included in many social experiences with his mother and father that may contribute to his good sense of self esteem and social competence. These learned skills may enhance survival for successful performance in his life roles.

The literature on androgyny (Constantinople, 1973; Ben, 1974; Spence, Helmreich and Stapp, 1975; Spence and Helmreich, 1980) suggests that those individuals who possess a high degree of both masculine and feminine qualities are higher in self esteem and more "behaviorally flexible" than others. This concept could be important to individuals achieving and fulfilling expectations in the classroom. Hoge and Luce's (1979) study suggested a positive relationship between achievement in classroom behaviors and interactions pertaining to responsiveness, compliance, initiative, attentiveness, self directed activity,

and socialability. These behaviors may give some support to the positive effects of an androgynous outlook.

Moral-ethical attitudes. Most remarks related to moral-ethical attitudes and behavior areas are inferences. As mentioned in other areas, Sarah values and expects respectful attitudes and behaviors in herself and in her children. As she said, "He is expected to be respectful to everyone, even if they are only two years old. And even if they are obviously 'dorky' and he can't stand them. That is about the only rule, really; being polite is about it."

Morally she does not seem rigid and has a gentle caring that includes not hurting others and being responsible. At one point in the interview she was discussing her own lack of discipline and gave an interesting example that lends some insight into her thinking. She made reference to the Mormon faith, and said,

> Because it is so secure and to be a member of this Mormon church is to never worry again as long as you live. The only problem is that I have a terrible tendency to say, "Oh, well, why not?" I mean, if someone offers me a glass of wine, it is very hard for me to turn it down. I like drinking good wine. I like the buzz and all that. I smoke more than I ought to. And there is no controlling that. I know that in order to stay happy I would just have to accept the fact that I don't discipline myself properly. I'm a very firm believer in all that stuff about not getting stoned and all this kinda' thing. It's really no one's

business but my own. I mean, obviously, if I was neglecting my children or something or other, that would be different.

The role modeling of this mother related to interpersonal competence with others seems present. The areas already mentioned are with her friends and involvement of Josh's school with his teacher and his classmates. He has also been at her place of work.

Little information was available regarding the role modeling with others that Josh's father is involved in that Josh also participates in. It was noted that Josh sees his father at work and at parties with television colleagues and personalities. Each of his parents seems to have good self concepts modeled for him.

Affect and Emotional Tone

Josh's mother has focused on affirming, praising activities rather than criticism and punishment. She used many endearing phrases during the interview and was absolutely convincing in her commitment to Josh's well being, yet without being overly restrictive or controlling. When asked about things Josh might say that she would praise, she responded:

> His opinions, and feelings and such--yes, if he comes up with a good remark. Like if we are talking about families and how--and what an ideal family would be, for instance, we will be talking about how people ought to behave toward each other in a family and he will come up with something about, you know, that "a family ought to be a whole group." He will come up

with say, something wonderful like, "Really I think families are real good for people who always try to consider each other and help each other," and I'll go, "that's really very nice." I try and find something good every day. There's always something that is done that is good every day. You hope so.

Another example of the emotional tone between mother and son:

There's a certain tune, you become in tune with people when you spend a lot of time with them and you are with them a lot, after all you've had them since they were nothing but a wiggle, and you really have to get to know what's wrong because all they say is a scream. And from that it's a natural progression. You know, you can see in your children when they are not behaving in their usual way or something. Like Josh has been having a hard time with this mess and my husband. Needless to say, it's very hard for him. And you notice that he is going to play out at other people's houses more and he's biting his fingernails more or all of a sudden his "blankey" he had given up is rather present in the TV room again, so you notice those things and so you can go to him and say, "Hey, I notice these things are happening. Is it because of some trouble you are having, something difficult in your life? Sometimes he'll say "No, no, it's nothing." And then it'll get worse and all of a sudden one day he'll say, "Yeah, you know, it's really, really hard because I get upset about you and Dave and it makes me cry."

Nicknames can sometimes be a clue to the emotional feeling tone in a home. Notice the loving tones reflected in the following related response.

> Well, I call him "My Sweet Joshie" a lot. He's very sweet, a sweet little thing, and I have a little song. You remember that little song, "Joshua, Joshua, sweeter than a _____ is what you are." An old, ancient musical. That's Josh's song. What else? I have all kinds of silly names for him. "Pumpkin," used to call him--all the silly names--"My Sweetie Boy."

The following quote from Sarah captures the general feeling tone in this home. Listen to this.

> We have a wonderful time, my children and I. I mean, I think of people who haven't had the experience and I wonder how they can go through life without it. I really do. I think it is just--it gets more amazing all the time. The babies were a bit of a pain, but as they grow up, they are men.

Since the boys do have regularity and continuity with their father, he, too, is involved. The time they have every other week-end with their father is important and it may also serve to prevent some role strain for Sarah to have this separate time.

Recommendations and Conclusions

This is a highly-achieving family who seem to be functioning well. They are accomplishing this in the context of a single-parent

family with an absent father who does remain involved with them. This mother expresses satisfaction with life and the activities and atmosphere of the home appear very functional. Josh's activities engaged in during a typical day and his mother's role task enactment during these activities reveal tasks Sarah is performing that facilitate optimal learning with only minimal recommendations for added facilitation of achievement. The components Clark proposes as essential in the family/child socialization process will be examined as to their effectiveness in the Reimer family.

The social network component seems very functional. Josh has exposure to a large variety of people and experiences that enrich both his work and leisure on a regular basis. His teacher and parents have regular communication and interaction. Sarah volunteers in his classroom one day each week and they all participate in school social interaction at potlucks and field trips. The family network seems open. His mother has a variety of friendships and family connections. His father is in TV production and exposes Josh to that world.

The affective climate component seems very functional. Josh has quality and quantity time in the warm, loving relationship of his mother and brother, and sees his father regularly as well.

The normative structure sponsored in this household is that of a relaxed democratic lifestyle. Sarah considers her role as child caregiver, socializer and educator as very important, and values learning and achievement. Josh is achieving very well. However, his study

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habits could become problematic in the future. The casual manner of study in the living room with others present and the television on may prove distracting with concentration loss. Closer monitoring and sanctioning of Josh's activities and behaviors during study time are needed. Sarah's style of sanctioning and disciplining seems too permissive for long-term study effectiveness. Sarah does foster independent thinking and helps Josh develop his own ethical and moral code by deep conversations on issues such as drugs, equality, racial issues, sex, money, etc.

The activity structure component in this family has balance and a broad variety of activities related to formal and informal learning. Josh engages in informal activities of physical play, crafts, hobbies, cultural outings, shopping, TV watching, etc. There is also participation in the literacy activities of reading and writing. Time is set aside for these activities. These activities are facilitated by an atmosphere of praise, encouragement and good role modeling. There are adequate physical resources provided with books, magazines, writing and studying materials. Responsibility related to chores for Josh is very weak in this household. A recommendation that would require the responsibility of cleaning up after himself each day also with a few other household tasks with appropriate sanctioning would provide more structure and encourage responsibility.

Perhaps Sarah could improve the quality of her life by working on growth in two areas. The first one relates to her relationship and "marriage arrangement" with her present spouse. She expressed

dissatisfaction and discomfort about this, as Josh has also sometimes done. The second area relates to her occupation. She expressed some dissatisfaction with her present job. Her capabilities seem high and a career could enhance her well being. Work with a counselor may help sort out and clarify these issues. Parental sponsorship of Clark's components can socialize children to achieve.

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